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A

PERSWASIVE

TO THE

Conscientious Frequenting

THE DAILY

Publick Prayers

OF THE

Church of England,

IN A

SERMON

UPON

1 THESSAL. 5. Verse 17, and 18.

John Mapletoft

LONDON,

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TO HIS
Eſteemed Good FRIENDS,
THE
INHABITANTS
OF THE
PARISHES
OF
St. { *LAURENCE JEWRY*, *MARY MAGDALEN MILK-STREET*, & *CHRISTOPHER*.

Gentlemen,

I Know not how better to expreſs the ſenſe I have of your great Kindneſs, in making ſo free a Choice of me to thoſe Relations, in which I now ſtand to you, than by lodging this Plain Diſcourſe in every one of your Houſes. I earneſtly requeſt, that it may be attentively read, and well conſidered of by all thoſe in your Families who can read; and may be read to ſuch as cannot read themſelves. And if I can prevail to have it examined Impartially, without all prejudice, and with the ſame Honeſt Deſign, with which it was Written, and Preached, I may modeſtly hope, that it will, through God's Bleſſing, produce at leaſt ſome viſible good Effects.

We

We have already (praiſed be God for it) daily Prayers in many Churches of this City, which afford us great choice of Hours; at ſome, or other of which, certainly moſt Men may, and the moſt Wiſe and Pious Men will find, or make leiſure, from their ordinary buſineſs, openly to own their Dependance upon, and pay their Publick Acknowledgments to that God, who both at firſt made, and hath ſince ſo Graciouſly Redeemed them, for himſelf; and who every day Maintains, Preſerves, and Bleſſes them. And I queſtion not but that we ſhould ſoon have Prayers likewiſe every day in moſt, I believe in all our Churches, if the Pariſhioners could be perſwaded to come, and give Countenance to their Miniſters, who are now diſcouraged from the Attempt, by the Shameful, Scandalous Thinnes *of their Congregations on* Wedneſdays, *and* Fridays, *when they are read.*

Though I confeſs my ſelf to be of Opinion (and that upon ſome Experiment, as well as upon good grounds of Reaſon) That even in thoſe Churches where there is the ſmalleſt Appearance at thoſe times, there would be twice, perhaps in a little while, Ten times as many at Prayers every day, were they once ſo ſetled, and Mens Minds duly awakened to the Conſideration of their Duty, and Intereſt, as now come on Wedneſdays, *and* Fridays. *Since the better any good thing is weighed, and underſtood, and the more conſtantly it is practiſed, the more it will gain upon us; and the nearer it comes to an Habit, the harder it will be to forbear it.*

I ſhould not need to add, were it not to prevent (if it be poſſible) all manner of Pretence to Cavil, That what is here advanced, manifeſtly enough appears to be Calculated for Cities, Market-Towns, or ſuch Populous Villages, in which both the nearneſs of the Church, and the Nature of Mens Employments may conveniently afford them ſo valuable a Privilege, as is that of Conſecrating ſome part of every day, to the

the Honour, and Publick Worship of their Dear Lord, and Master. Nor should I otherwise here say, because I have so often done it in the Body of this little Treatise, That I do all along press this Duty with the Exception, or Allowance of a Just, and Good Reason. That is of such a Reason, as a Prudent, and Pious Man, whose Mind is seasoned with that Genuine Principle of Divine Life, the Love of God, and all the Graces of his Holy Spirit, and influenced by a lively sense, and proportionable care of his Chief, and Lasting concern, that of his Immortal Soul, shall deliberately judge to be a sufficient Excuse for his Absence at that time; all the Circumstances of his Person, and Place, and necessary, or warrantable Occasions, being fairly accounted for.

What I affirm, and urge, is this, That the Common-Prayers *of our Church ought to be every where, and at all times frequented by all those of its Members, who can do it with that conveniency, which Christian Piety, Prudence, and Charity shall state, and agree to be such. And that 'tis every Man's Duty to be present at them, so often as his occasions, and condition of Life, so determined, will permit.*

And this Truth, I think, were there no other Argument for it, may be clearly made out by the General Laws of our Religion, such as are those which Command, and Invite us, To seek first the Kingdom of God. To do all things to the Glory of God. To let all things be done to edifying; *That is, to the Building up, and Advancement of the Church of Christ.* To think on (*in order to practise*) whatsoever things are Honest (or Venerable, and Worthy, Σεμνὰ) whatsoever things are Just, (*and such certainly is the daily Publick Homage of an Intelligent Creature, to his Great Creatour*) whatsoever things are of good Report. To live to the Lord, with one Mind, and one Mouth to Glorifie God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. To

give

give Glory to God in the Church (*in the Aſſemblies of Chriſtian People*) by Jeſus Chriſt throughout all Ages. To ſhew forth the Praiſes of him who hath called us out of Darkneſs into his Marvellous Light; *as being thereby made* a Royal Prieſthood: *Of whom, as we are ſuch, God now under the Goſpel requires conſtant Service, in the Publick Aſſemblies, as he did the Sacrifices of the Levitical Prieſts.* (Dr. Ham.) *Theſe General Rules, or Maxims of Chriſtianity, being all of them eaſily applicable to the Subject I Treat of, I thought good to mention here, for the farther Inſtruction, and Conviction of thoſe whom the Prejudice of a different Education, contrary Cuſtom, Party, or other little Inducement, may be apt to miſlead, and make unwilling to diſcern, and own, what they are not willing ſhould be true.*

But whatever the Event may be in reference to thoſe who thus chooſe to ſtand in their own light, I ſhall have, at leaſt, the Satisfaction of having now done what in me lay to perſwade you to the Practice of a Religious Duty, which, if undertaken upon the Principles, and performed by the Meaſures of true, and Undiſſembled Piety, will very much tend to the Honour and Glory of God, the Credit, Growth, and Advancement of Religion; the Eſtabliſhment of our Church, the Peace and Welfare of this Kingdom; and our own great good, both in this Life, and in that which is to come. That it may pleaſe God ſo to Bleſs this little Treatiſe, as that it may be ſome way inſtrumental to the promoting his Glory, the general Intereſt of Religion, and their particular Advantage who ſhall read, and duly conſider it, is the earneſt Prayer of,

Gentlemen,

Your Obliged
Faithful Friend, and Servant,

John Mapletoft.

A PERSWASIVE TO THE Conscientious Frequenting THE DAILY Publick Prayers OF THE Church of England.

1 THESSAL. V. 17, and 18.

Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

FRequent Intercourse with Heaven by the ascent, or going up of our minds to God, in the holy flames of fervent Prayer, and devout Meditation, is re-

commended to us, both by Scripture, and Reaſon, as the moſt proper, and moſt effectual means of our growth in Grace, and Spiritual Proficiency. For, ſuch intimate, and more immediate converſe with the Fountain of all Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Truth, will enlighten our Underſtandings; muſt needs attract, and unalterably fix our Wills upon the true Object of Rational Choice, the ſupreme Good; will untack, and looſen our Souls from the Clod to which they grow; will raiſe our thoughts above the Smoak, and Duſt, the petty Cares, and low trifling concerns of this World; it will ſublime our Affections; enlarge and improve our Capacities; refine our Tempers; Spiritualize our Natures; and thus every way fit us for that nearer Approach to, and cloſer Union with God, that centre of our immortal Spirits, which is to be our Reſt, and our Happineſs, our Crown, and our Glory in the next Life.

It muſt then be acknowledged, that the continued Uſe, and Excerciſe of ſuch Abſtraction of our minds from material, and ſenſible things, and devout Application of our Souls to God, in Prayer, and Thankſgiving, is a ſubſtantial

part

part of that Employment, and Duty, to which we are obliged, as we are Chriſtians; or of that Will, and good Pleaſure of God, which is revealed to us by our Bleſſed Lord in his Goſpel. And this Conſideration of the Nature and Efficacy of Prayer, and its neceſſary ſubſerviency to the great ends, and deſign of our Religion, may ſerve (beſides the conſent of learned Interpreters.) *Grot. Vorſt. Cornel. a Lapide*) to juſtify the Coherence, or mutual Relation of theſe Words, as I have now read them together. *Pray without ceaſing*, &c.

Now theſe Words, thus connected, do manifeſtly contain this Propoſition; *viz.* That we Chriſtians are obliged, by the tenure of our Profeſſion, and, as we are ſuch, to great Meaſures of our Devotion. That we are bound to have a conſtant, and aſſiduous Commerce with our good God, in Prayer, and Thankſgiving; who hath vouchſafed to us, in the Goſpel of his Son, a more expreſs Revelation of his Nature and his Will; of his Love and Kindneſs to us, in ſending his Son to redeem us, and his Holy Spirit to Inſtruct, Reform, and Sanctifie us; and of our Duty conſequent there-

upon, to walk worthy of God. 1 *Theſ.* 2. 10. *i. e.* To act, and live in ſome Proportion to that Honour God hath herein done us; who is now in Chriſt Jeſus, after a more peculiar manner, our Lord, our Maſter, our Friend, and Benefactor, our Father, and our God. That ſince God is come down to us, (the Word was made Fleſh, and dwelt, or had his Tabernacle, among us; appeared glorioufly in our Nature) our Souls muſt now be always mounting up to him, on the Wings of Prayer, and in the daily Sacrifice of Praiſe, and incenſe of Thankſgiving. And that we Chriſtians muſt habituate, and accuſtom our Souls to dwell above; and to converſe with the Original of our Being, the God of all our Mercies, and all our Hopes; ſince 'tis the great buſineſs of our Religion to diſpoſe, and qualifie us in this Life, for the Enjoyment of God in the next; and by raiſing our Minds from groſs, and ſenſible Objects, to a reliſh, and taſte of things Spiritual and Inviſible, to Naturalize us to Heaven.

And, ſince theſe general Precepts, *Pray without ceaſing*; *In every thing give thanks*; do unqueſtionably import both Frequency, and

and Perſeverance in the whole extent and latitude of Devotion; both as to its ſeveral Parts, as alſo, as to its Circumſtances of Time, and Place, including all kinds, and all manners of Addreſs to God; whether ſettled, and regular; or Accidental and Occaſional, in point of time; publick in Churches, or private in our Cloſets and Retirements; or with our Families, in point of Place: it muſt be confeſſed, that we are chiefly, and more eſpecially obliged to that kind, or manner of Addreſs, which moſt fully anſwers the Principal Ends, and Fundamental Reaſons of Prayer in general.

Now the great end, and deſign of praying to God, being to do Honor to him, in the Acknowledgment we make, that as we derive from him, ſo we wholly depend upon him, for all that we are, or have, or hope for; and, to procure from God a ſupply to all our own, and others wants, both in our private and publick Capacities; it evidently follows, That the commands here given, *To Pray without ceaſing*; *and, To give thanks in every thing*; or upon all Occaſions, and Opportunities, which do preſent themſelves, muſt be underſtood, and

and that principally, to lay an Obligation upon us to make Conſcience of frequenting the daily publick Worſhip of God, where we have an opportunity of ſo doing. Since this manner of Application to God, doth apparently, above any other, advance the glory of God, and promote all the valuable Intereſts both of our ſelves, and others; whether conſidered perſonally, or collectively, as we make a Society, or Body, either Civil, or Religious, as I ſhall ſhew hereafter.

My Buſineſs ſhall therefore at preſent be to attempt the clearing up, and making good the Doctrine laid down in theſe Words, taken in that moſt genuine and eminent ſenſe, which is allowed them by the moſt learned Interpreters, both Ancient, and Modern, *viz.* That we Chriſtians do ſtand obliged, both by virtue of theſe, and the like Precepts, and by the reaſon of the thing it ſelf, conſcienciouſly to frequent the daily publick Prayers of the Church, where we have opportunity; and can find, or make leiſure ſo to do. And that therefore no Man, or Woman ought to think it altogether an indifferent thing, (generally ſpeaking, and the Cir-

Circumſtances of particular Caſes being allowed for) whether they go to ſerve God with the Congregation; or ſtay at home, and employ themſelves in ſome other thing, tho lawful, yet at that time, not neceſſary; or not ſufficient to furniſh them with ſuch a reaſon as may ſerve to juſtify them to God, and their own Conſcience, directed by the meaſures of Chriſtian Prudence and Piety; of Love to God, and a due Care of their Immortal Souls.

Now the Obligation we all have not to forſake the Aſſembling of our ſelves together with our Chriſtian Brethren, every day in God's Houſe, unleſs we are hindred by ſome good Reaſon, I ſhall, I hope, evince and make to appear from theſe five following Conſiderations.

Firſtly, From the import, and meaning of the Precepts here mentioned; and others of the like Senſe, and Signification, *viz. That this is the Will of God in Chriſt Jeſus concerning us.*

Secondly, From the Conſideration of the Glory and Honour we bring to God; and the Reputation

tation and Credit we give to Religion, by our daily, open, and ſolemn Addreſſes to him.

Thirdly, From the many, and great Advantages we our ſelves ſhall reap from our conſtant Attendance on God in this our bounden Duty, and Service.

Fourthly, From the Conſideration of the good, and intereſt of others; which we do hereby moſt effectually promote whether ſingle Perſons, or the Community of which we are Members.

Fifthly, From the general Conſent, and univerſal Practice of the Chriſtian Churches of all Ages, and Places, throughout the World.

1. Then we Chriſtians are obliged to frequent the daily publick Worſhip of God, out of regard to his Authority, who hath enjoined us ſo to do, in this and the like places of Scripture; ſuch as are theſe following, Epheſ. vj 18. *Praying always* [Ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ at every ſeaſon] *with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perſeverance.* Luke xviij. 1. Where our Saviour, ſpeaks a Parable, *to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint*, μὴ ἐκκακεῖν, not to be ſlothful, remiſs,

miſs, and negligent in this great Duty, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. *I will therefore that Men Pray every where.* Which both St. *Baſil*, and *Beza* do expound of Houſes, or Churches ſet apart for the Publick Worſhip of God; in which St. *Paul* would have Chriſtians to Pray, and not only at the Temple in *Jeruſalem.* Dr. Patrick's *Diſcourſe concerning* Prayer. Now, although it muſt be granted, that none of theſe Scriptures do expreſly enjoyn the daily uſe of Publick Prayers; yet ſince theſe do more compleatly anſwer all the ends of Prayer, than any private Devotion can do, they muſt of neceſſity be comprehended, and by parity of Reaſon chiefly deſigned in thoſe general commands.

Beſides that, *To Pray without ceaſing*, or continually, may be very properly expounded of our preſenting our ſelves before God, in his Houſe, as often as we are either obliged thereto by publick Authority, or invited by the laudable Cuſtom, and Example of pious, and well-diſpoſed Perſons. For *this, in a popular and legal ſence, is doing a thing indefinently, or without ceaſing.* (Dr. *Barrow,*) *when we perform it ſo often as we are required*

by Law, or Custom. Thus the Priests are said, *Heb.* 9. 6. to go always into the Tabernacle, accomplishing the Service of God. Always *i. e.* at all those solemn times which were appointed for such Service, and the Apostles are said, *Luke* 24. 53. after Christ's Ascension, and their return to *Jerusalem*, to have been continually in the Temple, blessing, and praising God. *i. e.* They went daily to the Temple at the usual times, or hours of Prayer. Since then we are commanded, *To Pray without ceasing; and to give thanks in every thing, or upon every Occasion; to pray always, to pray every where,*—in every season, or upon every opportunity; except a man shall be so absurd as to deny the solemn times set apart every day for Publick Devotion, to be seasons, and opportunities of Prayer; the Material Church to be a place; and the hours of Prayer to be any part of time; (and so to be necessarily included in the terms, *always, without ceasing, continually*) he must confess, that all these Precepts of our Saviour, and his Apostles, may, and ought, by the Analogy of Faith, and Deduction of right Reason, to be interpreted at least, as well of the Publick, as of

our

our Private Addreſſes to God. And conſequently, That we ought for this great Reaſon to be Aſſiduous, and conſcienciouſly Diligent in our daily Publick Approaches to God in his Sanctuary; becauſe this is a conſiderable part of our Duty, as weare Chriſtians; Or, *This is the Will of God in Chriſt Jeſus concerning us.*

And the pious Wiſdom of our Church having provided, that not only on all the Lord's days, and ſome few others, ſet apart for ſpecial Reaſons; but on every day of the Week alſo, Morning and Evening Prayer ſhall be openly read, or ſaid, by the Curate that Miniſtreth in every Church or Chapel, being at home, and not being otherwiſe reaſonably hindred; 'tis hereby plainly intimated, That every one who is not reaſonably hindred, ſhould alſo come to hear it read every day: A Bell being ordered to be tolled thereunto, that the People may come to hear God's Word, and to pray with the Miniſter. As he who pleaſes may find at the end of the Diſcourſe concerning the Church, in the Book of Common-Prayer. Theſe things conſidered, it will not certainly become any

Wiſe and Good Man, who Loves his God, his Religion, his Country, or his own Soul, uſually, and cuſtomarily, or indeed at any time, to abſent himſelf from the daily Publick Worſhip of God, without a very juſt and warrantable reaſon. And he who allows himſelf in ſuch plain Omiſſions of his Duty, upon any unjuſtifiable account whatever, denies to yield Obedience to this Precept, *Pray without ceaſing*; ſince he ceaſes, nay he refuſes to Pray, when the Providence of God, the Direction, and Order of the Church, the Cuſtom and Example of Devout Perſons, do ſtrongly invite, and ſollicite him, by reſorting to God's Houſe, and hearing his part in the Publick Worſhip, to do open Honour to God, and Advantage both to himſelf, and the whole Church Militant.

2. We are alſo obliged to frequent the Publick Prayers, becauſe we do thereby bring Glory, and Honour to God; and give Credit, and Reputation to our Religion; and that in much greater Degrees than we can do by any private Addreſſes to him, either in our Cloſets, or with our Families. For tho' it be true, that we may Worſhip God acceptably at home; and it is

both our Duty and our Advantage ſo to do; yet ſince Honour, and Glory, are properly outward Significations of the inward value and regard we have for Perſons; we do not properly honour, and glorifie God, in our private Devotions; but do then more eſpecially give him the honour due unto his Name, and make his Name to be Glorious, when we Pray unto, and Praiſe him, before much People. For, when we every day make our Court to him, as to the great King, and Lord of all; and wait upon him, in his own Houſe, we thereby give a publick Teſtimony of the Eſteem and Reverence we have for him. We own our ſelves to be of his Family and Retinue; to depend upon him, and to hold all we have as from him, by the daily publick Homage we thus pay unto him. Hereby we may alſo properly be ſaid to ſerve God, or to do our Duty to him in promoting his Intereſt, (if, I may ſo ſpeak,) by keeping up, and maintaining a lively ſence of his being in the Hearts of Men; and propagating, and advancing Conceptions of him, Worthy of his Greatneſs, and tranſcendent Majeſty; of his infinite Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs; when we thus avowedly celebrate him, as the Univerſal

verſal Parent, Preſerver, and Governour of Mankind; who alone underſtands, and alone is both able, and willing to ſupply the wants of all his Creatures, who invoke, and depend upon him.

Hereby we likewiſe bring Credit, and Reputation to our Religion; which can hardly be ſupported, without ſuch Viſible Profeſſion. We openly declare our ſelves it's Champions; and that we are not aſhamed of our Bleſſed Lord, nor of his Words, or the Laws of his holy Inſtitution, in the midſt of a crooked, and perverſe, a ſcoffing, and Atheiſtical Generation. We let all profane Miſcreants ſee, that they can no more baniſh the Notion of God out of the World, then they can pluck the Sun out of the Firmament; tho they may poſſibly wink hard enough, neither to ſee the one, nor take due notice of the other: That notwithſtanding their affected Blindneſs, and wilful Ignorance, God hath ſtill a very conſiderable party in the World; numbers of Men, who think it their greateſt Honour to be, and to be accounted his Servants, and every day publickly own that Name, and Title; and as ſuch, pay

their

their daily Attendance on their dear Lord and Maſter, in his own Houſe.

3. Another Motive, or Reaſon obliging us to frequent the daily Prayers of our Church, is the Conſideration of the Advantages we our ſelves ſhall reap from our ſo doing. Of which ſort, I ſhall name only theſe Three.

Firſt, That we hereby do ſpend ſome part of our time every day in the beſt and moſt heavenly Employment; and conſequently after the beſt manner that we are capable of ſpending it.

Secondly, That this lays a farther Obligation upon us, to lead a more ſtrict, and holy Life than other men do; and to be exemplary, as well in all other Graces, as in that of Devotion.

Thirdly, That this is a certain means, if we are not wanting to our ſelves, of our growth in Grace; and particularly, in thoſe two Cardinal Graces (the Top and Perfection, as well as the Ground-work, and Foundation of all others;) the Love of God, and the Love of our Neighbours.

1. Then

1. Then I ſay, That the time we ſpend in the Publick Service of God is the beſt ſecured, and the beſt beſtowed of any other. This is certainly the beſt, becauſe the moſt Heavenly Employment; it being the continual Buſineſs of the Angels, and the Archangels, and all the Hoſt of Heaven, with joint Praiſes to Laud, and Celebrate the Divine Majeſty. So that by thus doing, we begin Heaven here; we do already enter upon the Life, and State, and Employment of Angels; being united to that bleſſed Choir, and doing as they do. And he that ſhall duly acquit himſelf herein, will have this great ſatisfaction, that he hath ſpent at leaſt one hour every day to the beſt advantage, as an Anticipation, and fore-taſte of that Life, which we hope to lead in the preſence of God for ever.

2. Another Advantage we derive from frequenting daily the Publick Prayers is this, *viz.* That our ſo doing lays a ſtrong, and daily Obligation upon us to live a more ſtrict, and holy, a more divine and heavenly Life, than others do; to be unblamable, unreprovable in all our Converſation. And he who doth not charge him-

himſelf with the daily Practice and Exerciſe of all thoſe Graces, for which he prays to God, hath reaſon to ſuſpect himſelf of Hypocriſie, and Formality in theſe his open Prayers. Thoſe then who make Conſcience of Approaching God twice every day in his Publick Ordinances, muſt alſo for this very Reaſon, beſides all others, make more Conſcience of preſenting him, as with a pure Heart, ſo with a Circumſpect, Innocent, Unſpotted Life. And certainly if ſuch Men are not much better than others, who pretend leſs, they are much worſe; ſince they do hereby, openly profeſs more Zeal for God's Glory, more Love to him, and more Care to pleaſe him; and a greater ſenſe both of his Goodneſs to them, and their Duty to him, ſo that if they diſparage ſuch their Profeſſion, by unſuitable Practice; they give juſt Reaſon to believe, they have ſome other end to ſerve then that of Religion.

3. A Third Advantage which will acrue to us from our daily Attendance on God in his Houſe, is growth in Grace; and particularly in the Love of God, and of our Neighbour; thoſe two Eminent and Comprehenſive Graces,

on which hang all the Law, and the Prophets. For the firſt of theſe, the Love of God; 'tis certain, that the more often we Converſe with him, the more intimately we are acquainted with him (who being the ſupreme good needs only to be known, that ſo he may be loved by us) the more ſtrongly will our Souls cleave unto him: So that if to our Private Meditation, and Prayers, we add ſuch daily ſolemn Converſe with him in the Publick Prayers and Thanksgivings, and hearing of his Word, our Love to him muſt needs grow and increaſe thereby. And as to the Love of our Neighbour; ſince every ſiding, and taking part, though but in ſome inconſiderable Opinion, Intereſt, or Cuſtom, Education, or Courſe of Life, is a peculiar Endearment, and ground of Affection towards thoſe of the ſame Opinion, Intereſt, or Way; how much more prone will they be to bear an hearty good Will and Kindneſs toward each other, who are daily engaged in the ſame common Intereſt; and that of the higheſt Importance, *viz.* a joint endeavour to bring Publick Honour to their common Lord; and to forward their own Salvation; who twiſt and combine their Prayers, and Praiſes; and

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converſe here with one another, as they hope to do hereafter in Heaven. Not to mention now the ſolemn Interceſſion made twice aday for the whole Catholick Church, and the open Declaration of our ſo forgiving all Men, who offend, or injure us, as we deſire and hope for Mercy, and Forgiveneſs at the Hands of God. Now, beſides the Efficacy of the united Prayers of a Chriſtian Congregation, put up for themſelves and for each other (at which Chriſt hath promiſed to be preſent in a ſpecial manner, *Matt.* xviij. 20.) It is, I think, an undeniable certainty, That he who ſhall both in Private, and alſo in Publick, thus daily importune the Throne of Grace, ſhall obtain a greater meaſure of theſe, and all other Graces, than he who contents himſelf with his Private, Solitary Prayers only.

4. Another Conſideration enforcing this Duty of our waiting upon God, in his Sanctuary every day, is the great Benefit, and good which others may receive from our ſo doing; and that, not only as particular Perſons taking notice of our regular, ſteady, exemplary Piety, joined with an unblemiſhed Life; and a truly Chriſtian

Converſation, may be won by our good Example, to the ſame practice; and by the ſhine of our Light, by ſeeing our good Works, may alſo themſelves come in like manner to glorifie our Father which is in Heaven. But alſo, becauſe Publick Prayers, both as they tend to the bettering all thoſe, who do conſcienciouſly frequent them, and ſo to the augmenting the number, and improving the Graces of Righteous Perſons, for whoſe ſake God often ſpares a wicked Place, or People; and alſo, in their Nature, Deſign, and End, are the proper Inſtrument for the obtaining and continuing Publick Peace, and Tranquillity; or the Eſtabliſhment, and Proſperity of a Church and State. Whence *R. Maimonides*, well obſerves, That he who dwells in a City in which there is a Synagogue, or Houſe of Prayer, and doth not therein Pray with the Aſſembly, he is to be cenſured as an ill Neighbour: as one that is wanting in his Duty to promote, by his Prayers, the good of that Community, of which he is therefore an Unworthy Member.

And I have been credibly informed (to apply this point to our ſelves) That in the Days of

of Queen *Elizabeth*, when our Church by the Bleſſing of God upon her neceſſary and warrantable Reformation, had quite broken off the Chains, and Fetters of the *Romiſh* Uſurpation; ſome (perhaps moſt) of our Pariſh Churches were as numerouſly thronged at the daily Prayers, as they have ſince been at Sermons. And that, as our Liturgy grew afterwards into neglect, by the Indevotion and Prophaneneſs of ſome; and then into Contempt, by the Miſ-perſwaſion, Vain Affectation of Novelty, falſe Pretences to greater Purity of Worſhip, and the like evil Artifices of others: So true Piety, and Loyalty, Men's Duty to God, and their Prince, Juſtice and Charity, Brotherly Kindneſs, and good Will to each other, began proportionably to leſſen and decay: till at length every thing of Religion, but the Name, and Pretence only, ſeemed to die, and expire in a Bloody Civil War: Of which our Poor Church ſtill wears the Marks; and feels ſome of its dire Effects to this very day, in thoſe breaches which are yet uncloſed. From whence we may rationally conclude, That as the neglect, and diſ-uſe of our Common-Prayer was the beginning of thoſe Confuſions, and Miſe-

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ries, which ruined both our Church and State; ſo the moſt probable means to ſecure our Religion, as it is now Eſtabliſhed, and to engage Almighty Power on our ſide, is, for us all to unite our ſelves as in the Profeſſion of the Evangelical, Primitive, Apoſtolical Faith; and in Uniform Obedience to all the Laws of God; and in ſtedfaſt Loyalty to our Prince; and Univerſal Love, and hearty good Will one towards another: So alſo, in the ſame daily Publick Worſhip of our great Lord. Which, together with the Articles of our Religion is the proper, Characteriſtick, and Diſtinctive Mark of the pureſt, and beſt conſtituted Church in the World, the Church of *England*; in which, by the goodneſs of God, we do now live; and in which, by his Grace, we hope to die.

The 5. (and laſt) Conſideration, from which I propoſed to deduce our Obligation to the daily ſervice of God in the Church, is the general Conſent, and Univerſal Practice of the Church of Chriſt, in all Ages, and Places, almoſt in the World. The Apoſtles, as we read *Luke* 24. 53. after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, were continually in the Temple, *i. e.* Every Morning and

and Evening (in which ſence the Morning and Evening Sacrifice was called the continual Burnt-Offering) at the time of Publick Prayer, Praiſing and Bleſſing God. And the Apoſtolical Conſtitutions (which are by all allowed to be very Ancient) do enjoin the Biſhop *to Admoniſh and Command the People to come every day, both Morning and Evening, to the Publick Prayers; and that none by abſenting himſelf, ſhould maim the Church, and take away one Member from the Body of Chriſt.* 2. *Conſtit. Chap.* 59.

And as in all Ages, ſo in all Places, the Churches both of the *Eaſtern*, and *Weſtern* Communion, *Greek*, *Armenian*, *Roman*, *Lutheran*, and *Calviniſt*; all Chriſtian Churches, almoſt do ſo Univerſally Underſtand, and Agree, That the daily Publick Worſhip of God is enjoined both by the Scriptures, and the very Nature of a Chriſtian Church, That there is ſcarce any place in which it is not conſtantly, and Religiouſly obſerved, and uſed. For a Chriſtian Church is in its proper Notion, *An Aſſembly of Men and Women met together to Worſhip God by Chriſt*; Or, *A company joined together to have Fellowſhip with God, and one with another*

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in all holy Duties; of which Prayer, Thanksgiving, and Praiſes are the Chief. As thoſe who need, or Deſire farther Information, or Satisfaction in this Argument, may find largely, and convincingly handled, in a Diſcourſe concerning Prayer, lately publiſhed by a pious and learned Divine of our Church, Dr. *Patrick*, which I wiſh were in all Men's Hands.

Thus have I ſhewed the Obligation we all have as far as every Man's Opportunities, and Circumſtances will give leave, to a Conſciencious Attendance on the daily Publick Worſhip. And that this Duty is preſſed, and bound upon us;

1. By that Obedience we owe to the Will of God, revealed in the Goſpel.

2. By that Zeal we ought to have for the Honour, and Glory of God, and the Intereſt of our Religion.

3. By the Advantages we may reap from our ſo doing, *viz.* The laying out ſo much of our time in the beſt manner, and to the beſt Account. Being hereby put upon great Circumſpection, and Watchfulneſs over our ſelves, that

that we lead unreprovable, and exemplary Lives; our own growth in all Grace; and especially in the Love of God, and of our Neighbour.

4. By the concern we ought to have for the good of others; the Publick Prosperity, and Establishment both of our Church and State.

5. By the Authority and Example of the Church of Christ in all Ages, and Places.

But after all this, Men have not leisure from their secular Employments; *and serving God in their Calling*, they tell us, *is better than Praying*. But is not Religion our Calling too? I am sure the Scripture uses the Word, Vocation, or Calling in that Sense, and I think in that only; and the Apostolical Constitutions tell us, That our secular Callings, Trades, or Professions, are our Work, by the bye only, as providing for the Necessities of this lower Animal Life. Αἱ τέχναι τῶν πιστῶν ἐπίφορμά ἐισιν. But the Worship of God is our Principal Business. Ἔργον δὲ ἡ Θεοσέβεια. 2. *Const.* 61.

If we must live Godlily, as well as Soberly, and Righteously; we must then reckon the Publick Worship of God among the Businesses of our

Lives, and allow a competent time for the Diſcharge of what appears to be one third part of our Duty. I would adviſe even the Pooreſt Perſons, who maintain themſelves and Families by hard Labour, to venture ſo much of their time with God, as the Prayers take up every day; and I am perſwaded they would find it no ill Husbandry, God would not be in their debt at the years end. But thoſe who have not leiſure, becauſe they will not have it; becauſe, not being Content with Food and Raiment (the Wealth of a true Chriſtian) they will be dangerouſly Rich; though they do thereby fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into thoſe many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which often drown them, or their Poſterity in Deſtruction and Perdition: theſe ought well to conſider the Nature, and Doctrines of our Holy Religion, *viz.* That it teaches us *not to Love the World, nor the things of This World; to be Crucified to the World: To ſet our Affections on things above, and not on things on the Earth; To lay up our Treaſure in Heaven: To provide for our ſelves Bags that Wax not old, To be rich towards God, To be led by the Spirit, and to walk after the Spirit*; and then let them well weigh, whether a Re-

a Religion Eſtabliſhed on theſe, and the like Maxims, may not reaſonably demand at leaſt one 24*th.* part of their time for the publick Honour, and Service of God, and the promoting their own great Intereſt, that of their immortal Souls; and the good of the Community in which they live, and whether their conſtant, or frequent Pretence to want of leiſure for the Publick Worſhip, be not in truth a Criminal Vitious Love of the World, and too much minding Earthly things, and, in plain Engliſh, chuſing to ſerve Mammon, rather than God?

Certainly if the generality of Men were as truly Wiſe, and as truly Pious as they ought to be; if they underſtood the Intereſts of their Souls, of their Religion, of their Church and Nation, as well as they do the little concern of getting Money; they eaſily might, and would, ſo order their Affairs, that our Churches might be every day as well filled in the Morning and Evening, as the *Exchange* is at Noon. And doubtleſs, he who having the neceſſary Preparations of an holy Chriſtian Converſation, a Life led in all Godlineſs, and Honeſty; (or a ſerious, prevailing Reſolution ſo to Live;) of

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an upright Intention, and ſincere aim at the glory of God; his own growth in Grace, and the good of others; ſhall make Conſcience of entring God's Courts twice every day; when he comes to die, will find more Satisfaction in that one hour thus ſpent, than in all thoſe he ſpends in his Worldly concerns, and no particular will ſtand fairer in the account of our time, which we muſt all make to God at the laſt day, than the *Item*, So much ſpent every day, when we had opportunity, in the Publick Worſhip, and Service of God.

ERRATA.

PAge 3. l. 17. dele *Our*. p. 7. l. 18. dele *ly* in Firſt*ly*. p. 8. l. laſt. lege *μὴ*. p. 11. l. 6. *we are*. p. 12. l. 14. lege *bearing*. p. 23. l. 11. put *L.* before 2. p. 25. l. 21. put *L.* before 2. p. 28. l. 10. lege *This* Item.

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